

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE  
NASHVILLE DIVISION**

MICHAEL DAVID SILLS )  
and MARY SILLS, )  
                        )  
Plaintiffs,           )  
                        )     **CASE NO. 3:23-cv-00478**  
v.                    )  
                        )  
                        )  
**SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION, et al.** )     **JUDGE WILLIAM L. CAMPBELL, JR.**  
                        )  
Defendants.           )     **Magistrate Judge Chip Frensley**

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**PLAINTIFFS' RESPONSE TO DEFENDANTS STATEMENT OF UNDISPUTED  
MATERIAL FACTS AND STATEMENT OF ADDITIONAL FACTS IN OPPOSITION  
TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION  
AND ROLLAND SLADE'S MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT WITH RESPECT  
TO PLAINTIFF MARY SILLS**

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Pursuant to Local Rule 56.01(c), Plaintiffs David Sills and Mary Sills submit this Response to Defendants Statement of Undisputed Material Facts and Statement of Additional Facts in Opposition to the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention and Rolland Slade's Motion for Summary Judgment with Respect to Plaintiff Mary Sills (the "Motion").

1. In or around July 22, Dr. Bart Barber retweeted an original Tweet posted by Eric Geiger on X, formerly known as Twitter. [Ex. A, Depo. B. Barber 180:6-15; *id.* at ex. 14].

RESPONSE: Agree in part, with the additional factual clarification of the tweet having been made in collaboration with Geiger's tweet and Lyell's tweet of the same false content in July 2022. *See* Dkt. No. 311-1 at 2.

2. Dr. Barber's retweet of Eric Geiger's original Tweet is the only statement made concerning Mary Sills of which she is aware. [Ex. B, Depo Mary Sills 99:19-23, 103:23-25].

RESPONSE: Disputed. Bart Barber also Tweeted “████████” in a now deleted tweet.

*See Exhibit 38, copy of Barber tweet. Moreover, Barber tweeted additional statements and posted a statement online which did not specifically identify Mary by name. However, the tweets did concern the subject matter of Lyell’s ██████████ ██████████. See Exhibit 39, additional Barber tweets dated June 8, July 7, and July 11, 2022, and article discussing the implications of the tweet.*

3. Dr. Barber’s retweet did not contain any additional language, comment, or commentary on Eric Geiger’s original Tweet. [Ex. A, Depo. B. Barber 180:6-15; *id.* at ex. 14].

RESPONSE: Disputed. As then-President of the SBC, Bart Barber posted Eric Geiger’s original tweet, contemporaneously posted by Lyell, and doing so carried the weight of his authority and tacit endorsement of the posted message, in furtherance of the false narrative promulgated by Defendants. *See* Dkt. No. 311-1at 2, see also, Exhibits 8 (Geiger depo), 9 (Geiger email), 10 (Geiger email). Plaintiffs admit that Bart Barber did not type any additional text to Eric Geiger’s Tweet.

4. The portion of Eric Geiger’s original Tweet which Mary Sills alleges defamed her states: “After Sills departed from Southern Seminary, Jennifer showed me correspondences from Sills’ wife that reinforced all she had shared with me, including text messages with a threatening tone and indications she had known of the sexual encounter.” [Ex. A, Depo. B. Barber 180:6-15; *id.* at ex. 14; Ex. B, Depo. M. Sills 99:19-23, 103:23-25].

RESPONSE: Agree. Plaintiffs agree that the above quoted portion appears in a tweet by Eric Geiger.

5. The message from Mary Sills to Jennifer Lyell that was shown to Eric Geiger, and to which Mr. Geiger’s Tweet referred, was made in 2018 after the sexual encounters between

David Sills and Jennifer Lyell had been disclosed to the leadership of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

RESPONSE: Disputed. Eric Geiger testified that he only recalled seeing this email in preparation for his deposition and did not know “[REDACTED] [REDACTED].” Exhibit 8, Geiger Dep. at 291:7-13. Plaintiffs agree that Mary Sills sent an email to Jennifer Lyell in 2018 after David Sills resigned from Seminary. Plaintiffs dispute that the activity that constitutes “[REDACTED]” was actually disclosed by Lyell, and further dispute that what has been disclosed by Lyell constitutes any activity, at all, that ever occurred between Jennifer Lyell and David Sills; Plaintiffs contend the disclosure fabricated and otherwise omitted what occurred. *See* Exhibit 40.

6. The message from Mary Sills to Jennifer Lyell that was shown to Eric Geiger stated, “Why would you want to completely destroy the lives of people that opened their home, heart, family, and lives to you?” [Ex. 8, Depo. E. Geiger 290:22-292:18; *id.* at ex. 22.]

RESPONSE: Disputed. Plaintiffs agree that Mary Sills sent an email to Jennifer Lyell that included the statement quoted above, but dispute and are unable to agree, based on Geiger’s testimony, [REDACTED]. *See* Ex. 8, Geiger Dep. at 291:7-13.

7. In August 2016, David Sills has informed Mary Sills of the past inappropriate relationship between he and Jennifer Lyell. [Ex. B, Depo. M. Sills 53:14-16].

RESPONSE: Agree. Plaintiffs agree that in August 2016 David Sills told Mary Sills that he had an inappropriate relationship with Jennifer Lyell.

8. At the time of the message from Mary Sills to Jennifer Lyell to which Eric Geiger’s Tweet referred, Mary Sills had been informed and knew of the past inappropriate relationship

between David Sills and Jennifer Lyell. [Ex. B, Depo. M. Sills 53:14-16; Ex. C, Depo. E. Geiger 290:22-292:18; *id.* at ex. 22].

RESPONSE: Disputed. Eric Geiger's Tweet implies that Mary Sills knew of David Sills and Jennifer Lyell's relationship while it was ongoing. Mary Sills did not learn of the relationship until after it ended. *See Exhibit 17, M. Sills. Dep. at 53:14-16; Exhibit 18, D. Sills Dep. at 338:14-339:9.*

**PLAINTIFFS' STATEMENT OF ADDITIONAL UNDISPUTED FACTS**

1. Bart Barber was President of the Southern Baptist Convention at the time he retweeted Eric Geiger's July 2022 tweet. (Ex. 12, LYELL\_00176244, Exhibit 13 to Barber Dep.).

RESPONSE:

2. As President of the SBC, Bart Barber was a member of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. (Barber Dep. at 12:16-13:14).

RESPONSE:

3. Bart Barber served on Lifeway's Board of Trustees while Eric Geiger was CEO. (Barber Dep. at 12:16-13:14).

RESPONSE:

4. Barber attended all Executive Committee meetings while he was SBC President. (Barber Dep. at 13:22-14:2).

RESPONSE:

5. Barber's social media posts were made in his capacity as SBC President. (*Hunt v. S. Baptist Convention*, No. 3:23-cv-00243, 2025 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 62180, at \*124 (M.D. Tenn. Apr. 1, 2025); *Hunt v. S. Baptist Convention*, No. 3:23-cv-00243, Dkt. Nos. 2418-18 through 2418-24 (M.D. Tenn. Aug. 31, 2024)).

RESPONSE:

6. Bart Barber did not [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. (Barber Dep. at 27:15-23).

RESPONSE:

7. Bart Barber tweeted that Lyell's claims " [REDACTED]." (LYELL\_00349031).

RESPONSE:

8. Bart Barber tweeted that [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. (LYELL\_00349031).

RESPONSE:

9. Defendants Slade, McLaurin, Litton and Mohler never reviewed communications [REDACTED]. (Slade Dep. at 34:21-35:5; 41:4-20; 47:13-21; 56:19-57:1; McLaurin Dep. at 124:15-125:8; Ex. 4, Litton Dep. at 177:11-119:7).

RESPONSE:

10. Bart Barber told Megan Basham that he retweeted Geiger's tweet a [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. (Sills\_076718).

RESPONSE:

11. Bart Barber posted to his social media the tweet made by Geiger shortly after its July 2022 publication. (LYELL\_00176244).

RESPONSE:

12. Guidepost was not tasked with [REDACTED]. (Supp. Resp. and Obj. of Def. Guidepost Sols., LLC to Pltfs.' First Set of Interrog. Nos. 11-12; *see also* Guidepost's Mem. of Law in Support of Mot. to Dismiss, Dkt. No. 78 at 21).

RESPONSE:

13. In his SBC President biography and social media, Bart Barber was acting in his official capacity as SBC President. (*Hunt v. SBC*, No. 3:23-cv-00243, Dkt. Nos. 2418-18 to 2418-24).

RESPONSE:

14. Eric Geiger's tweet alleged that Mary Sills sent "text messages with a threatening tone" and that she "had known of the sexual encounters." (Barber Dep. Ex. 13).

RESPONSE:

15. Mary Sills sent an email to Jennifer Lyell that asked, “Why would you want to completely destroy the lives of people that opened their home, heart, family, and lives to you?” (Sills\_082292).

RESPONSE:

16. David Sills and Jennifer Lyell’s relationship ended before August 2016. (David Sills Dep. 338:14–339:9).

RESPONSE:

17. Mary Sills learned of the relationship in August 2016, after it had ended. (Mary Sills Dep. 53:14–16).

RESPONSE:

18. Eric Geiger did not disclose the full text of Mary Sills’s message in their tweet or in any contemporaneous public materials. (Barber Dep. at 178:9-180:23).

RESPONSE:

19. Bart Barber did not include any disclaimer on the retweet to indicate it was not an endorsement. (Barber Dep., Ex. 14).

RESPONSE:

20. The SBC Executive Committee and Bart Barber issued public statements affirming [REDACTED].  
(EC\_0011516; LYELL\_00348617).

RESPONSE:

21. Mary Sills sought counseling from Denise Richardson for her emotional distress, including social ostracism and psychological harm. (Mary Sills Dep. 83:3–85:2).

RESPONSE:

22. Willie McLaurin and Rolland Slade wrote the article *A Statement on the release of a list of alleged abusers*, which was published on sbc.net on May 26, 2022. (<https://www.sbc.net/on-the-release-of-a-list-of-alleged-abusers/>).

RESPONSE:

23. *A Statement on the release of a list of alleged abusers* article published on sbc.net contains a hyperlink to the “List of Abusers.” (<https://sbcecc.s3.amazonaws.com/FINAL+-+List+of+Alleged+Abusers+-+SBC+REDACTED.pdf>).

RESPONSE

24. The SBC has publicly acknowledged that Lyell’s claims are “ [REDACTED] ” (LYELL\_00175855).

RESPONSE:

25. Lyell provided direct input [REDACTED]. (GPSILLS\_031013; LYELL\_00033568).

RESPONSE:

26. Lyell’s [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. (GPSILLS\_007953).

## **RESPONSE:**

27. ECSBC issued a public apology to Lyell. (<https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/sbc-executive-committee-approves-resolution-with-sexual-abuse-survivor/>).

**RESPONSE:**

28. In its mediation with Lyell, the ECSBC told the mediator it had "██████████" because: "██████████  
██████████." (GPSILLS 014235).

#### **RESPONSE:**

29. The ECSBC and Lifeway developed a [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. (Exhibits 7, 9, 10, texts between Geiger  
and Lyell).

## RESPONSE:

30. Bart Barber appeared on 60 Minutes to discuss sexual abuse in the SBC. (Exhibit 11, Barber Dep. at 45:2-9).

## RESPONSE:

31. Bart Barber was part of the [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. (Exhibit 11, Bart Barber depo, 45:2-9; Exhibit 38, Barber tweets; Exhibit 39, Barber tweets).

**RESPONSE:**

Dated: July 11, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

By: /s/ Katherine B. Riley  
Katherine Barrett Riley (TN BPR#021155)  
John W. ("Don") Barrett (admitted *pro hac vice*)  
Sterling Aldridge (admitted *pro hac vice*)  
BARRETT LAW GROUP, P.A.  
P.O. Box 927  
404 Court Square North  
Lexington, MS 39095  
Ph: (662) 834-2488  
Fax: (662) 834-2628  
[kbriley@barrettlawgroup.com](mailto:kbriley@barrettlawgroup.com)  
[dbarrett@barrettlawgroup.com](mailto:dbarrett@barrettlawgroup.com)  
[saldridge@barrettlawgroup.com](mailto:saldridge@barrettlawgroup.com)

/s/ Shannon M. McNulty  
Shannon M. McNulty (admitted *pro hac vice*)  
CLIFFORD LAW OFFICES, P.C.  
120 N. LaSalle Street, 36<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60602  
(312) 899-9090  
(312) 251-1160 Facsimile  
[SMM@cliffordlaw.com](mailto:SMM@cliffordlaw.com)

*Counsel for Plaintiffs*

#### **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I, Katherine B. Riley, hereby certify that on July 11, 2025, I served the above and foregoing on all counsel of record via the Court's CM/ECF filing system.

/s/ Katherine B. Riley  
Katherine B. Riley